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SUBJECT: DUTCH CABINET APPROVES SEMI-ANNUAL BILATS WITH
TURKEY

¶1. (SBU) The Dutch Council of Ministers (cabinet) on March 17 approved the establishment of semi-annual bilateral consultations with the Turkish government. The Dutch plan a working group dedicated specifically to EU issues, including the accession process. Additional working groups will discuss economics, justice and other issues of mutual concern. The first meeting is planned later this year - probably in October.

¶2. (SBU) The Dutch expect the Turks to fully meet the Copenhagen Criteria and will continue to press for this. EU financial issues also must be resolved. MFA Turkish desk officer Mary-Honor Kloeg told poloff March 20 that the MFA expects accession to take another 10 years.

¶3. (SBU) Kloeg informed poloff that Turkish MFA Undersecretary for European Affairs Ahmet Acet will visit The Hague April 25, to discuss a proposed memorandum of understanding. A formal GONL announcement is expected to follow.

ARNALL